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Police.

Representation of the depressed classes in the constabulary.

224 Q.—Mr. L. C. GURUSWAMI: Will the hon. the Home Member and the hon. the Law Member be pleased—

(a) to call for and lay on the table a statement showing the number of constables and head constables in the various districts of this Presidency; and

(b) to state how many of them are members of the depressed classes

A.—(a) The hon. Member is referred to statement D appended to the Police Administration Report.

(b) The hon. Member is referred to G.Os. Nos. 658, Public, dated 15th August 1922 and 563, Public, dated 21st July 1923, both of which have been placed on the Editors' Table. The returns called for in this latter Government Order will be published in due course and will give the information required.

Railways.

Railway line between Salem junction and Atur.

225 Q.—Mr. S. SATYAMURTI: Will the hon. the Home Member be pleased to state—

(a) whether a scheme for a railway line between Salem junction and Atur was sanctioned long ago and partly constructed;

(b) whether the railway cess was being collected on the understanding that the line would be extended to Atur; and

(c) the reasons why the scheme has been given up?

A.—(a) Yes.

(b) Not so far as Government are aware.

(c) The project has not been given up but is merely held up. The reasons for this are explained in the answer to question No. 226.

Mr. T. ADINARAYANA CHETTIYAR:—"Will the hon. Member be pleased to expedite construction of the line?"

The hon. Sir ARTHUR KNAPP:—"May I refer my hon. Friend to the answer to clause (c) of the following question 226 where it is stated that the construction of the line will depend on the settlement of the gauge question and the district board's capacity to finance or guarantee the line."

The Salem district board railway scheme.

226 Q.—Mr. V. C. VELLINGIRI GOUNDER: Will the hon. the Home Member be pleased to state regarding the Salem District Board Railway scheme—

(a) whether any reply has been received from the Railway Board about the decision of the gauge of the proposed Panruti-Trichinopoly line;

(b) why the Salem-Atur Railway scheme has been delayed, although all the preliminary works were completed long ago;

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(c) whether this is not the proper time to sanction the scheme and put it to execution so as to make it serve the object of affording relief to people during these famine days;

(d) whether it is a fact that the Salem District Board has recently submitted a new proposal to sanction the Salem-Rasipuram Railway scheme on account of the Salem-Atur Railway scheme having been under consideration for a long time with the Railway Board; and

(e) if so, how far the above proposal of the District Board has been considered by the Government?

A.—(a) Yes. The Railway Board have decided that the Villupuram-Trichinopoly Railway should be constructed on the metre gauge.

(b) As the Salem-Atur line was a feeder to the Villupuram-Trichinopoly line, the former project was held over till the gauge of the latter line had been decided. The gauge of the main line has now been decided but the question whether the Salem-Atur Railway should be built on the same gauge as the main line or on a different gauge is still under the consideration of the Railway Board.

(c) The construction of the line will depend on the settlement of the gauge question and the district board's capacity to finance or guarantee the line.

(d) Yes.

(e) The President, District Board, Salem, was asked to submit a sound scheme for financing the project and his reply is awaited.

Mr. V. C. VELLINGIRI GOUNDER :—"As regards (b), Sir, I want to know what the nature of the further consideration is. The only consideration that delayed the construction of the Salem-Atur line was the decision as regards the size of the gauge. Since that has been decided upon, what is the further consideration that delays the decision of the Railway Board in regard to that?"

The hon. Sir ARTHUR KNAPP :—"I understand my hon. Friend to be asking me to explain the process that is going on in the Railway Board which has resulted in the delay of their final decision."

Mr. V. C. VELLINGIRI GOUNDER :—"My question was this: The only consideration that delayed the construction of the Salem-Atur line was the decision as to the size of the gauge. Since that question has been decided, what is meant by saying 'it is still under the further consideration of the Railway Board'?"

The hon. Sir ARTHUR KNAPP :—"I am afraid I can only refer my hon. Friend to my answer already given. It is quite out of my power to say why the Railway Board is delaying its decision."

Mr. C. V. VENKATARAMANA AYYANGAR :—"Will the Government be pleased to ask the district board to defer any action which they may take in respect of their other lines, in order to give their full consideration to the decision of the Railway Board in regard to this line?"

The hon. Sir ARTHUR KNAPP :—"I did not quite follow the hon. Member."

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Mr. V. C. VELLINGIRI GOUNDER :—“ With regard to the Salem-Rasipur line the president of the district board has been asked to submit a sound scheme for financing the project. What I submit is, till the final decision as to the size of the gauge in regard to the Salem-Atur line is reached, the Salem-Rasipur line should not be taken into consideration. Will the Government be pleased to postpone it until that question is decided ? ”

The hon. Sir ARTHUR KNAPP :—“ I understand my hon. Friend to suggest that the District Board, Salem, should be asked not to consider further the Salem-Rasipur line until the question of Salem-Atur scheme is settled. My answer is that this is a question which should be raised in the district board. This is not a matter in which the Government can in any way dictate to the district board. ”

Mr. V. C. VELLINGIRI GOUNDER :—“ Since all the preliminary works have been finished with regard to the Salem-Atur line and it has got the approval of the Railway Board, why not the Salem-Rasipuram scheme which has been suggested at a later stage be held over till the question of the Salem-Atur line is decided ? ”

Rao Bahadur T. A. RAMALINGA CHETTIYAR :—“ Will the Government be pleased to expedite the final consideration of the Salem-Atur line so that it may be taken up before the other question is taken up ? ”

The hon. Sir ARTHUR KNAPP :—“ I am afraid the Government have no hand in it. ”

Rao Bahadur T. A. RAMALINGA CHETTIYAR :—“ They can send a reminder to the Railway Board to expedite the matter. ”

Mr. T. ADINARAYANA CHETTIYAR :—“ The Railway Board may be asked to expedite their decision with regard to the line from Salem to Atur for which the survey has been completed and the tract has been decided ; and the only thing that remains is the acquisition of the land. Long long ago, the then Governor of Madras, Sir Arthur Lawley, when he visited Salem in reply to an address said that the line from Salem-Atur should be made a broad gauge line and the line from Salem Junction to Salem Town was made a broad gauge line for that reason. Under these circumstances will the hon. the Home Member be kind enough to request the Railway Board to expedite their decision as regards the gauge of the Salem-Atur line ? ”

The hon. Sir ARTHUR KNAPP :—“ I am afraid we are again degenerating into a debate. My reply is that the Government is anxious to see every possible railway line built in this presidency. The matter is a complicated one. There is much difficulty in getting the district board to finance the scheme which is the root of the matter. Until the district board gives us an assurance that they can finance the line, we cannot go on. ”

Railway line from Virudunagar to Tenkasi.

227 Q.—Mr. P. K. S. A. ARUMUGA NADAR : Will the hon. the Home Member be pleased to state—

(a) whether the Government have recommended to the Railway Board the construction of the new railway line to run from Virudunagar to Tenkasi (via Sivakasi) ; and